





Cabañas:

Training for Peace —

GEN James Hill, commander of U.S. Southern Command, visits soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division participating in Exercise Cabañas '02 in Chile.

Senior Airman JoAnn S. Makinano, USAF

Cabañas

THE United Nations has long been involved in peacekeeping missions around the world, and over the years has identified 33 key tasks that peacekeeping forces must perform.

More than 1,300 U.S. and Latin American soldiers gathered in Chile to train in those U.N. tasks during the two-week exercise dubbed Cabañas '02.

LTC Nicolas Britto, chief of the exercise's Joint Information Bureau, said Cabañas '02 replicated a U.N. peacekeeping mission involving two fictional countries that had been fighting. Four villages were caught in the middle of a demilitarized zone on opposite sides of a zone of separation, and

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Soldiers from 7th Special Forces Group participate in a high-altitude, low-opening jump from a Chilean aircraft with 30 paratroopers from nine countries during Cabañas 2002.

Staff Sgt. Cherie A. Thurlby, USAF

Cabañas

(Left) Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division participate in a mine-clearing drill during the exercise.

(Right) Other soldiers from the division carry a “mine victim” on a makeshift litter during another training session.

(Far right) Chilean Army Pvt. Hector Briones Martines demonstrates the proper use of the PRC-624 radio to a group of Brazilian soldiers.

(Below) Chilean soldiers pose as civilian protestors and block a simulated United Nations aid convoy by setting fire to trees on the entrance road to Chile's Fuerte Lautaro.

(Below, right) Peruvian soldiers set up a vehicle checkpoint.

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey A. Wolfe, USAF



the exercise participants were tasked to protect that ZOS.

“Ten training lanes were set up to hone soldiers’ skills in various tasks,” Britto said. “The lanes covered everything from humanitarian aid, to identification and marking of mines, to civil-military operations.”

While many 82nd Airborne Division soldiers participated in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, elements of the division’s 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment, deployed to Chile for the exercise.

“This was very realistic training,” said 1st Bn.’s SSG Gary Benslay. “Our soldiers were challenged in many different scenarios that required them to react without using excessive force.”

Benslay said the exercise helped him understand that peacekeeping operations not only help ease tensions among warring factions, but also allow U.S. soldiers to become accustomed to the U.N. mandates governing peacekeeping operations.

The exercise also helped build camaraderie among the soldiers of the participating nations.

“This was a unique experience for us,” said Paraguayan Lt. Fernando Gayoso. “Ninety-nine percent of us had never been in this type of situation. We all worked together as a team. It was truly a great success.” □

PH2 Roberto Taylor, USN





Staff Sgt. Jeffrey A. Wolfe, USAF



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